

ON KECHIMYAKU

With Reverend Raido Hirota

Translated and edited by Udumbara Foundation volunteers

QUESTION: What is *kechimyaku*?

Rev. Hirota: Some people call Nichiren Daishonin Buddha. Some people call Shakyamuni Buddha. But Shakyamuni is really not the true Buddha; he was a provisional Buddha. In Nichiren Shoshu we believe the one who is truly the Buddha is Nichiren Daishonin, not Shakyamuni. We call Nichiren the true Buddha, but we don't worship him. We call Nichiren Buddha because he taught us teachings that were more profound than Shakyamuni's teachings. What Shakyamuni taught was limited.

Whereas Shakyamuni's believers have gold or wooden statues of Shakyamuni as their object of worship, we believers of Nichiren Daishonin have Gohonzon as their object of worship, and are thereby worshipping the Law and not the person. We worship *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*, not Daishonin. So those who believe in Shakyamuni believe in the person -- Shakyamuni -- and we who believe in Nichiren Daishonin's teachings believe in the Law. Thus, the basis of *kechimyaku* is the Law or *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*. Nichiren Daishonin is not the basis of *kechimyaku*. It is only the Law that is the basis of *kechimyaku*. The Law comes first, before the person.

The person who studies, perceives and comprehends the Law is Buddha. This Buddha will teach others.

Those who worship Shakyamuni look towards him and pray towards him. They don't look and pray towards what he perceived and comprehended. That is why it is incorrect. In Nichiren Shoshu

we look beyond the person of Nichiren Daishonin to the Law of *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*. It is the Law that embodies all the Buddhist principles. We do not worship Daishonin himself.

Kechimyaku has no relationship to the flesh-body being transferred to Nikko Shonin, just as we don't pass on what we think or what we feel to our children when we give birth to them.

The Daishonin's teaching is that enlightenment exists in everything. No one but the Daishonin teaches this. This is the root of *kechimyaku*, that enlightenment exists in all living things since time without beginning. So, while Taiseki-ji repeatedly says they're the only ones who have *kechimyaku* in an effort to make people believe what they say is true, they have forgotten that *Namu-myoho-renge-kyo* exists in all people and all things.

The spirit of the Gohonzon is not written on the surface of the paper it is inscribed on. What is written on Gohonzon is representative of the spirit. You have to have an example of that spirit to focus on, which is why we have Gohonzon. Gohonzon is a representation of the Buddha-spirit.